



U.S. ARMY CIVIL AFFAIRS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (AIRBORNE) ***FACT SHEET***

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PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Psychological operations are a vital part of the broad range of U.S. political, military, economic and ideological activities used by the U.S. government to secure national objectives. PSYOP is the dissemination of truthful information to foreign audiences in support of U.S. policy and national objectives.

Used during peacetime, contingencies and declared war, these activities are not forms of force, but are force multipliers that use nonviolent means in often violent environments. Persuading rather than compelling physically, they rely on logic, fear, desire or other mental factors to promote specific emotions, attitudes or behaviors. The ultimate objective of U.S. military psychological operations is to convince enemy, neutral, and friendly nations and forces to take action favorable to the United States and its allies.

Psychological operations support national security objectives at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of operations.

Strategic psychological operations advance broad or long-term objectives. Global in nature, they may be directed toward large audiences or at key communicators.

Operational psychological operations are conducted on a smaller scale. They are employed by theater commanders to target groups within the theater of operations. Their purpose can range from gaining support for U.S. operations to preparing the battlefield for combat.

Tactical psychological operations are more limited, used by commanders to secure immediate and near-term goals. In this environment, these force-enhancing activities serve as a means to lower the morale and efficiency of enemy forces.

Both tactical and theater-level psychological operations may be used to enhance peacetime military activities of conventional and special operations forces operating in foreign countries. Cultural awareness packages attune U.S. forces before departing overseas. In theater, media programs publicize the positive aspects of combined military exercises and deployments.

In addition to supporting commanders, PSYOP units provide interagency support to other U.S. government agencies. In operations ranging from humanitarian assistance to drug interdiction, psychological operations enhance the impact of those agencies' actions. Their activities can be used to spread information about ongoing programs and to gain support from the local populace.

Psychological operations units in the U.S. Army are language and culturally oriented. The 4th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C., the only active-duty Army psychological operations unit, constitutes 26 percent of all U.S. Army psychological operations units. The remaining 74 percent, split between the 2nd and 7th Psychological Operations Groups, are in the Army Reserve.

- PERSUADE, CHANGE, INFLUENCE -